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Chairman: Mr. Yousfi ..... (Algeria)
later: Mr. Mitsopoulos (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Greece)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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Agenda item 132: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

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Report of the Joint Inspection Unit: Evaluation of results-based budgeting in peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/60/709 and Add.1)

1. **Ms. Yu** Hong (China) said that the expansion of peacekeeping operations had increased the related expenditure to almost $5.4 billion in 2007/08, placing a huge burden on Member States, which funded those operations through peacekeeping assessments. Accordingly, the management of peacekeeping operations should be strengthened to ensure that those resources were used wisely and that fraud and abuse were prevented.

2. Her delegation was concerned by the problems highlighted in the reports of the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations for enhancing internal management controls and oversight. Another concern was the failure to maintain a high budget implementation rate for peacekeeping operations, resulting in an unencumbered balance of $500 million for the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 and an implementation rate of 91 per cent, which was 3 per cent lower than in the previous financial period.

3. While each peacekeeping operation was unique and implementation was unpredictable, owing to factors such as delayed recruitment and deployment and higher-than-anticipated vacancy rates, the situation could be remedied by the timely presentation of revised budgets. A high unencumbered balance was a sign that the Secretariat was overbudgeting for peacekeeping missions. The Secretariat should endeavour to base its preparation of peacekeeping budgets on the actual situation and actual needs.

4. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) had often indicated that management efficiency and effectiveness should be reviewed to identify opportunities for improvement through streamlining and other methods before additional resources were requested. Additional mandates did not necessarily create a need for additional institutions or resources. The use of existing institutions or resources should be considered.

5. Her delegation supported the Organization's involvement in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and had noted the recommendations of the Secretary-General regarding the coordination of such efforts and the enhancement of inter-agency capacity-building. It also agreed with the Advisory Committee that the relationship between the Inter-Agency Working Group on Disarmament,

Demobilization and Reintegration and the Peacebuilding Commission must be clearly defined. To avoid redundancy of institutions, a division of labour should be devised, cooperation should take place with different departments, agencies, funds and programmes represented in the field and partnerships should be developed with the World Bank, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations.

6. Peacekeeping operations, which had played an important role in maintaining peace and stabilizing regional situations, were growing in influence and in financial and administrative complexity. China would continue to lend its financial and political support, and would work with the other Member States and the Secretariat to ensure that the financial and administrative management of those operations was proactive and flexible.

7. **Mr. Traystman** (United States of America), recognizing the commitment of all peacekeeping personnel and paying tribute to peacekeepers who had lost their lives, said that the surge in peacekeeping operations had placed a strain on the Organization, with a record number of almost 100,000 military and civilian peacekeepers deployed in the field and with a peacekeeping budget that could reach $6 billion, or even $7 billion if new missions were established in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic. With that in mind, his delegation expected stronger management, more efficient and effective implementation of mandates and greater accountability.

8. The cross-cutting issues before the Committee, which would be reflected in the third annual resolution on such issues, were integral to the successful management of missions. With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, the Organization and the Member States should work towards creating a culture which supported and believed in a policy of zero tolerance. The Conduct and Discipline Teams, OIOS and staff at Headquarters and in the field were pursuing that goal through the Organization's three-pronged strategy of preventing misconduct, enforcing standards of conduct and taking remedial action.

9. The working relationship between the Conduct and Discipline Teams and OIOS should be clarified. They should strengthen their collaboration in addressing all allegations and cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly to ensure that serious (category I) cases were addressed rapidly and that the Organization and/or Member States initiated whatever disciplinary actions or criminal proceedings were necessary. Regular reports on the subject should specify whether the allegations or cases belonged to category I (serious) or category II (less serious); the current status of each allegation or case; which organizational entity was responsible for taking action; and what action had been taken to close each case. Those core responsibilities should be assumed by permanent Conduct and Discipline Teams at Headquarters and in the field.

10. A further cross-cutting issue, enhanced coordination and collaboration in efforts undertaken by United Nations entities and other partners, had become the focus of several important initiatives. With regard to coordination between United Nations peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams, his delegation advocated following the example of the proposed budget for the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/61/759), which, in response to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/249, had included detailed information on the funding provisions and activities of some 13 United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

11. The United States delegation looked forward to the further strengthening of regional cooperation initiatives in such matters as aviation safety, medical services and logistics. It also commended inter-mission cooperation initiatives, noting, for example, that the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) regularly undertook joint border patrols and had temporarily redeployed military and civilian police personnel between them to undertake tasks which could not otherwise have been addressed within their individual personnel ceilings. Cooperation at the regional, mission and country team levels was particularly important in the costly area of air operations, which accounted for one third of the operational costs of peacekeeping missions and which might be reduced through the regional pooling of air assets, the use of surface transportation where practical and the proposed deployment of a dedicated aircraft for passenger operations.

12. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report on the overview of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/61/786), the management of fuel operations in field missions was a highly

complex activity with significant inherent risks that must be managed, including the potential for fraud, waste and adverse impacts on health, safety and the environment. In its resolution 60/266, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to review all aspects of fuel management, including the preparation of a comprehensive fuel management manual, implementation of the electronic fuel accounting system, development of standard operating procedures on fuel management and preparation of an annual fuel procurement plan. However, little progress on the matter was discernible in the Secretary-General's report. The required work should be undertaken without delay.

13. The United States delegation welcomed the definition of quick-impact projects as small-scale projects rapidly implemented by peacekeeping missions to aid the local population and to create and sustain confidence in and support for new missions, usually during the first two years of a mission. In response to the General Assembly's request for a comprehensive policy on quick-impact projects (resolution 60/266), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had determined a method of establishing budgetary requests for such projects from 2008 onward. Accordingly, decisions on quick-impact projects should be made in the context of an examination of the activities of the local United Nations country team. After the first two years of a mission, such projects should, if necessary, be carried out and funded as part of the regular activities of other members of the country team.

14. With regard to training, another cross-cutting issue, greater use should be made of videoconferencing and e-learning. Training should be relevant to the mission's mandate and should not be supplied away from the mission during the drawdown and liquidation phases. It would be more efficient and cost-effective for trainers to travel to the mission location, rather than for mission staff to travel to receive training, especially during start-up. Predeployment training in issues such as safety, security and conduct was vital.

15. Having noted the initiative to benchmark the functions of multidimensional peacekeeping operations in order to develop standard organizational models, the United States delegation shared the Advisory Committee's reservations regarding the structuring of multidimensional missions according to standard templates, which tended to result in staffing tables which were too large. It looked forward to a close examination of the details provided in the overview report (A/61/786). Finally, with regard to the comments made at the Committee's previous meeting regarding the inability of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to reach agreement at its recent session, his delegation had put forward a series of proposals aimed at promoting a consensus, and discussions were still under way.

16. **Mr. Muhith** (Bangladesh) said that peacekeeping matters were extremely important to Bangladesh, a major troop-contributing country. While the reports before the Committee provided a good basis for negotiations, great effort would be required to study the total of some 350 pages they contained, in addition to reports on other issues and any supplementary information required in informal consultations. His delegation was concerned that the late submission of documentation, an issue which had arisen repeatedly, was adversely affecting the ability of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee to make well-informed decisions and recommendations. While the Controller had referred to the matter at the previous meeting, his delegation would like the Secretariat to explain why such an unacceptable situation was becoming routine. In that connection, his delegation concurred with the Advisory Committee's comments, in paragraphs 12 and 13 of its report on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (A/61/852), regarding time frames and accountability for the submission of reports.

17. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), responding to a question put by the representative of the Dominican Republic, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, at the Committee's 48th meeting (A/C.5/61/SR.48, para. 89), recalled that the Secretary-General's report on procedures for the purchase and utilization of vehicles and other equipment by United Nations field missions (A/60/842) highlighted five issues: system contracts for vehicles; spare parts; vehicle establishment ratios; road safety; and rotation of vehicles. During its consideration of the proposed budgets and performance reports for various peacekeeping missions, the Advisory Committee had discussed those issues with the representative of the Secretary-General and, where appropriate, had set out its views in its reports on individual peacekeeping

operations. Questions relating to system contracts and spare parts would be discussed further during the Advisory Committee's consideration of the Secretary-General's reports on procurement. The General Assembly had already endorsed the Advisory Committee's recommendation that, except in cases of emergency, surface transport should be used for contingent-owned equipment.

Agenda item 133: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (A/61/716 and Corr.1 and A/61/852/Add.6)

Agenda item 134: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/61/673, A/61/773 and A/61/852/Add.12)

Agenda item 135: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (A/61/724, A/61/774 and A/61/852/Add.4)

Agenda item 136: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (A/61/672, A/61/767 and Corr.1 and A/61/852/Add.11)

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (A/61/670 and A/61/852/Add.2)

Agenda item 139: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (A/61/720, A/61/842 and A/61/852/Add.9)

Agenda item 140: Financing of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (A/61/700, A/61/764 and Corr.1 and A/61/852/Add.10)

Agenda item 142: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (A/61/675, A/61/776 and A/61/852/Add.8)

Agenda item 143: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (A/61/715, A/61/783 and A/61/852/Add.7)

Agenda item 144: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East

(a) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (A/61/662, A/61/671 and Corr.1 and A/61/852/Add.1)

Agenda item 145: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (A/61/682, A/61/819 and A/61/852/Add.5)

Agenda item 146: Financing of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (A/61/598, A/61/689, A/61/745 and A/61/852/Add.13)

Agenda item 147: Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (A/61/683, A/61/744 and A/61/852/Add.3)

18. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing in a single statement the reports of the Secretary-General on the financing of specific peacekeeping missions, indicated that they included financial performance reports for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 and, where applicable, the proposed budgets for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, as well as a report on the final disposition of the assets of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (A/61/819). The financial performance reports indicated actual expenditure compared to the original appropriations for each mission, and therefore the rates of budget implementation, which varied from 80 per cent to over 99 per cent. Each report also outlined the specific action which the General Assembly was invited to take for the mission in question.

19. Proposed budgets for 10 peacekeeping operations for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 were being put to the Committee for its consideration. The budgets of six missions had increased by between 0.1 per cent and 6.4 per cent compared to the level of appropriations originally established for them: $474,334,900, an increase of 0.3 per cent, for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI); $46,848,000, an increase of 4.5 per cent, for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); $1,117,492,700, an increase of 2.4 per cent, for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC); $35,528,900, an increase of 6.4 per cent, for the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG); $39,923,100, a slight increase of 0.1 per cent, for the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF); and $44,675,100, an increase of 4.8 per cent, for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

20. The budgets of four missions had decreased by between 2.2 per cent and 21.3 per cent compared to the level of appropriations originally established for them:

$123,686,400, a reduction of 10 per cent, for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE); $213,157,200, a reduction of 2.2 per cent, for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK); $695,461,500, a reduction of 2.7 per cent, for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL); and $849,575,200, a reduction of 21.3 per cent, for the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS).

21. In the budget for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) (A/61/773), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected the planned full deployment of additional military and police personnel approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1682 (2006), while the budget for 2006/07 had only provided for phased deployment. The proposed requirements for 2007/08 also reflected the proposal to establish 79 posts, of which 23 were to be covered by resources for general temporary assistance, in order to strengthen the mission's capacity in civil affairs, public information, the rule of law, administration and logistics with a view to fulfilling the mandate established by the Security Council in its resolution 1739 (2007). As the Security Council, in the same resolution, had expressed its intention to review troop levels by 30 June 2007, the budget for 2007/08 was a maintenance-level budget, pending a Security Council decision on that matter.

22. In the budget for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) (A/61/774), the proposed increase in the resource requirements for 2007/08 had been prompted mainly by external factors. They included the higher cost of air charters on the world market, which affected expenditure on military personnel rotation and travel, and the appreciation of the Cyprus pound, which increased the cost of locally procured goods and services. The national salary scale for the mission had been revised upward with effect from 1 September 2006, resulting in an increase of about 14 per cent over the salary costs originally budgeted for 2006/07.

23. With regard to the budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (A/61/767), the increased requirements reflected higher estimated costs of employing international staff, based on actual expenditure incurred in 2005/06. Military contingent costs had also risen because of the addition of up to 916 military personnel authorized by the Security Council in its resolutions 1736 (2006) and 1742 (2007) to allow for the continued deployment to MONUC of an infantry battalion and military hospital previously authorized under the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). The estimates included an amount of $8.2 million to provide rations, fuel, air transport, medical services and supplies to elements of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) participating in joint operations with MONUC.

24. The Secretary-General, following consultations with the new Government installed as a result of the recent elections, had made proposals in mid-March 2007 regarding a new mandate for the Mission, which had already been extended for two technical rollover periods, until 15 April 2007 and then until 15 May 2007. The budget for 2007/08 was a maintenance-level budget based on the existing mandate and existing number of military and police personnel. The Secretariat would examine the budgetary implications of the new mandate and inform the General Assembly accordingly if changes in resource levels were required.

25. In the budget for the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) (A/61/842), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected a decrease in costs resulting from a reconfiguration approved by the Security Council in its resolution 1741 (2007) and the consequent reduction in troop numbers from the 2,070 provided for in the current budget to 1,470. The provision for various types of equipment, supplies, facilities, infrastructure, vehicles, ground transportation and freight had also been reduced.

26. In the budget for the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) (A/61/764 and Corr.1), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected higher expenditure on international staff as a result of mission-specific salary and common staff cost parameters and an increase in hazard pay effective from 1 January 2007. A revised salary scale for national staff effective from October 2006 and a related increase in hazard pay had also resulted in higher costs.

27. In the budget for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (A/61/776), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected a decrease in mission subsistence allowance for United Nations police officers resulting

from the Mission's decision to decrease deployment from 1,680 to 1,565 such officers. The cost of facilities and infrastructure, communications and information technology, supplies, services and equipment had also been reduced by the Mission's overall downsizing strategy, which would also reduce overall staff numbers from 2,870 to 2,808.

28. The status of UNMIK in the longer term was uncertain. Although the Security Council had received the proposals of the Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, the reactions of the major participants involved, including members of the Council itself, had left the timing and final date of the Mission's closure and replacement with a non-United Nations international entity far from settled. Consequently, the budget for 2007/08 was a maintenance-level budget, pending a Security Council decision on that matter.

29. In the budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (A/61/783), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected a reduction in military contingent costs resulting from the plan to repatriate a battalion in the current financial period and a decrease in the authorized contingent strength by 125 personnel. The non-deployment of 240 police, lower subsistence requirements and the application of a 10 per cent delayed deployment factor had reduced the estimated costs in relation to the United Nations police.

30. In the budget for the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) (A/61/745), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected a reduction resulting from the Mission's transition from the start-up phase to a maintenance phase involving fewer acquisitions and construction projects. As the Mission had completed its monitoring and verification functions in eastern Sudan, as stipulated in Security Council resolution 1590 (2005), it required 8,722 military personnel for 2007/08, compared with an authorized strength of 9,250. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration support would be provided for 45,000 ex-combatants, down from 85,000 in the current period. In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/212), the Security Council had endorsed the heavy support package for the African Union Mission in the Sudan; that would result in a cost of $288 million over six months. Taking into account the phased deployment of military, police and civilian personnel, the lead times for procurement and the availability of surplus United Nations assets in neighbouring areas, the Secretariat estimated that approximately $68.6 million could be expended by 30 June 2007. The resources required for the period ending on 30 June 2007 would be absorbed through the redeployment of the resources of the Mission, which had $69.9 million in projected savings for 2006/07. As from 1 July 2007, the Secretariat intended to use projected resources for 2007/08 flexibly and to submit to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee, a revised budget for the Mission including detailed justification of requirements for the heavy support package.

31. In the budget for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) (A/61/744), the proposed resource requirements for 2007/08 reflected the cost of replacing some 70 vehicles and the greater facility and infrastructure requirements stemming from the replacement of three water-purification plants. Security facilities would also be upgraded at three sites.

32. The report on the final disposition of the assets of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (A/61/819) indicated that assets with a total inventory value of $61.6 million had been disposed of as at 30 June 2006; assets with a total inventory value of $8.3 million and a residual value of just over $3 million had been donated to the Government of Sierra Leone; and assets with a total inventory value of $21.4 million had been transferred to the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). Action on the disposition of the UNIOSIL assets, including any further donations to the Government of Sierra Leone, should be taken upon the completion of the mandate of UNIOSIL. Assets with a total inventory value of $12.7 million and a residual value of $4.6 million had been sold to United Nations agencies, international organizations, NGOs, private companies and individuals on the basis of competitive bidding. Assets representing 4.9 per cent of the total asset inventory value, with an inventory value of just under $3 million and a residual value of $1.2 million, had been written off as a result of accidents, damage, obsolescence or wear and tear, or because they were uneconomical to repair.

33. Finally, in the light of General Assembly resolution 61/264 on liabilities and proposed funding for after-service health insurance benefits, the Mission's current share of such insurance provisions

and the 8 per cent provision included in budget proposals for 2007/08 would no longer apply.

34. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) introduced the related reports of ACABQ (A/61/852/Add.1-13). A recurrent comment in those reports related to the Secretary-General's proposals regarding the financing of after-service health insurance benefits. In line with the recommendations contained in its report on liabilities and proposed funding for after-service health insurance benefits (A/61/791), the Advisory Committee was recommending against those proposals, pending a decision by the General Assembly.

35. In its report on UNDOF (A/61/852/Add.1), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals, with the exception of his proposal to transfer funds to meet after-service health insurance liabilities. The Committee had been informed that a regional approach to geographic information systems or mapping was currently not envisaged. It recommended that the Secretary-General should consider providing for a coordinated capacity for the region.

36. In its report on the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET) (A/61/852/Add.2), the Advisory Committee recommended that all unencumbered balances should be credited to Member States without delay and urged the Secretariat to expedite the preparation of the final performance report for consideration by the Advisory Committee during the fourth quarter of 2007.

37. In its report on MINURSO (A/61/852/Add.3), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's financing proposals, with the exception of the resources proposed for 2007/08 for the funding of after-service health insurance benefits, pending a decision on the matter by the General Assembly, and the creation of an additional United Nations Volunteer post. The implementation of those adjustments would reduce the proposed budget by $353,500.

38. In its report on UNFICYP (A/61/852/Add.4), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals, with the exception of his proposal to transfer funds to meet after-service health insurance liabilities. The Advisory Committee commended UNFICYP for having undertaken a review of its support component staffing requirements, pursuant to a request by the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution 60/270, and for its subsequent reduction of posts. However, it expressed concern about the mission's cash position. As at 26 March 2007, there had been a cash deficit of $400,000, after allowing for a three-month operating reserve. Consequently, no reimbursement to troop-contributing countries could be effected at the current time.

39. As noted in its report on UNAMSIL (A/61/852/Add.5), the Advisory Committee had been informed that the final closure of UNAMSIL accounts should take place in 2009. The Advisory Committee urged the Secretariat to expedite the preparation of the final performance report.

40. As noted in its report on ONUB (A/61/852/Add.6), the Advisory Committee had been informed that the request of the Government of Burundi for the withdrawal of the mission had led to an earlier-than-anticipated repatriation of military personnel and civilian staff and that the mission's budget had not therefore been fully utilized. The Advisory Committee noted that over $53 million — or 18 per cent — of the appropriation of $292,272,400 for ONUB for the period 2005/06 had not been utilized.

41. In its report on UNMIL (A/61/852/Add.7), the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $7,130,900 in order to take account of the decommissioning of one helicopter for half of the fiscal year and the non-application of the Secretary-General's proposal regarding after-service health insurance, pending a decision by the General Assembly.

42. Another area where savings could be achieved was official travel. The Advisory Committee had remarked on the cost overruns under that object of expenditure and on the considerable number of unplanned trips made in 2005/06 and 2006/07, and had requested UNMIL to provide detailed explanations in the relevant performance report.

43. The Advisory Committee had requested UNMIL to analyse the costs and savings resulting from the implementation of the Mission Electronic Fuel Accounting System, which was being piloted in UNAMSIL, MONUC and UNMIL. It would follow up on the matter in the 2008/09 budget cycle.

44. In its report on UNMIK (A/61/852/Add.8), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's financing proposal, with the exception of the resources proposed for the period 2007/08 for the funding of after-service health insurance benefits, pending a decision on the matter by the General Assembly. The implementation of that adjustment would involve a reduction of $2,480,400 in the proposed budget for UNMIK for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

45. In connection with the difficulties of retaining staff in UNMIK and the various measures that were being considered to help mitigate the problem, the Advisory Committee had recommended that action should be expedited. The Advisory Committee had also observed that, as the Mission transferred competencies and underwent downsizing, its organizational and staffing structure, as well as the grade levels of posts, should be kept under review.

46. As noted in its report on UNMEE (A/61/852/Add.9), the Advisory Committee had been informed that the budget proposal had been based on the assumption that flight restrictions would be lifted soon and that UNMEE would operate seven helicopters. The Advisory Committee had subsequently been provided with revised cost estimates, since the restrictions were likely to be maintained and only the existing three helicopters would be required. It recommended a reduction of the Secretary-General's proposals in the amount of $10,203,000, in consideration of the revised cost estimates.

47. In its report on UNOMIG (A/61/852/Add.10), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's financing proposal, with the exception of the resources proposed for the period 2007/08 for the funding of after-service health insurance benefits, pending a decision on the matter by the General Assembly. The implementation of that adjustment would involve a reduction of $519,100 in the proposed budget for UNOMIG for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

48. In its report on MONUC (A/61/852/Add.11), the Advisory Committee recommended acceptance of the Secretary-General's financing proposal, with the exception of the resources proposed for the period 2007/08 for the funding of after-service health insurance benefits, pending a decision on the matter by the General Assembly, and the establishment of four posts, the need for which should be met through the use of existing vacancies. The implementation of those adjustments would involve a reduction of $4,753,200 in the proposed budget for MONUC for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008.

49. In its report on UNOCI (A/61/852/Add.12), the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of $1,642,700 in the amount budgeted, in order to take account of the non-application of the Secretary-General's proposal regarding after-service health insurance, pending a decision on the matter by the General Assembly.

50. The Advisory Committee understood that, in light of the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement on 4 March 2007, the Secretary-General would consult with the Ivorian parties to clarify the role expected of the international community in supporting the peace process. The Secretary-General had been requested to submit his recommendations to the Security Council by 15 May 2007. Based on related decisions by the Security Council, a revised budget proposal for 2007/08 would be submitted at a later date.

51. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Operation should review its staffing structure in light of its changing operational environment, taking into account the high vacancy rates it continued to experience for civilian personnel. Consideration should be given to transferring substantive functions from international staff and United Nations Volunteers to national staff, as well as to the possibility of redeploying existing staff to cover any new functions provided for in the revised budget proposals.

52. The Advisory Committee had remarked on the cost overruns under official travel during 2005/06 and 2006/07 and requested UNOCI to provide detailed explanations in the relevant performance report. The travel budget should also be closely monitored and controlled during the coming period, as it could provide opportunities for further savings.

53. As noted in its report on UNMIS (A/61/852/Add.13), the proposed budget for UNMIS did not contain financial resource requirements for the operations in Darfur, as a decision by the Security Council on mandates had still been pending at the time of budget preparation. Following acceptance of the heavy support package of assistance to the African Union Mission in the Sudan by all parties, the Secretary-General had indicated to the Advisory

Committee that savings from the UNMIS budget for the current period would be used to finance the packages' implementation up to 30 June 2007. As from 1 July, the requirements would be met through the flexible use of the resources appropriated for 2007/08, and a revised budget would be submitted to the General Assembly, through the Advisory Committee, in September 2007. With those considerations in mind, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the resources requested for UNMIS, with the exception of those relating to after-service health insurance. In recognition of the fluidity of the electoral process, the Advisory Committee recommended general temporary assistance funding for the additional staff requested for the Electoral Assistance Division.

54. *Mr. Mitsopoulos (Greece), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

55. **Mr. Thomma** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Moldova and Ukraine, paid tribute to those peacekeepers who had lost their lives during the current year and to the troop-contributing countries, without whose commitment peacekeeping would be an impossible endeavour.

56. The European Union was concerned by the fact that a number of key reports of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee would not be available until the end of the current session. While he was aware of their ever-increasing workloads, the timely availability of reports was essential if delegations were to perform their functions. The European Union nonetheless reaffirmed its support for peacekeeping as a core function of the United Nations and hoped that future operations would use their resources as efficiently as possible and continue to identify potential savings.

57. The Secretary-General had proposed a total peacekeeping budget of almost $5.4 billion for the period 2007/08. It was essential for all peacekeeping operations to be provided with adequate resources.

58. **Mr. Saizonou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the African Group, recalled the points raised by the Group during the preceding meeting's debate on cross-cutting issues. Owing to circumstances on the ground, few African vendors were able to take advantage of procurement opportunities in the field, and nationals of African countries, particularly women, were underrepresented among mission personnel. That situation, which was particularly acute at the management level, should be addressed promptly.

59. While the progress made in reducing vacancy rates at certain missions was welcome, further steps should be taken to maintain adequate staffing levels. The Administration's swift implementation of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors concerning the disposal of assets in host countries and the implementation of quick-impact projects would greatly assist the countries concerned.

60. The Group welcomed plans by UNMIL to allocate a large proportion of training resources to the training of national staff. Cooperation and coordination in the area of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration needed to be strengthened. Even though the Mission was winding down, adequate resources should be provided for those activities in order to further consolidate peace and security in the country.

61. He also stressed the importance of quick-impact projects for UNMIL. He hoped that the proposal to disband the Quick Impact Projects Unit and implement the programme from within existing staffing resources would not adversely affect the implementation of the Mission's mandate. In that regard, the funds requested for the continuation of those projects, particularly to assist inaccessible rural communities that did not benefit from other sources of external support, should be made available.

62. Turning to MONUC, he said that it was important to consider resource requirements in the light of the reality on the ground. The Group welcomed the efforts to improve the Mission's administrative structure and to implement General Assembly decisions and Advisory Committee, Board of Auditors and Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recommendations. The Group was concerned about the recommendations contained in paragraphs 25 and 27 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/61/852/Add.11), which would entail a reduction in the proposed budget for MONUC. While the prudent management of peacekeeping budgets was important, any decision regarding the proposed budget should adequately address long-term peace and stability requirements in the Democratic

Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region as a whole.

63. The Group welcomed the progress made on the peace process, in particular the successful holding of presidential and legislative elections and the preparations for local elections, which would be another crucial step towards democracy. The Democratic Republic of the Congo would continue to need international support in all those endeavours.

64. The Group welcomed the Secretary-General's comments on the expansion of the logistics hub in Entebbe, Uganda, but was disappointed that no concrete information had been given about the evaluation of support functions to determine which ones should be relocated to Entebbe or about the time frame for completion of the evaluation. He urged the Secretary-General to expedite the evaluation and report on its status at the second part of the resumed sixty-second session.

65. Turning to UNMIS, he said that the Group welcomed the agreement reached by the African Union, the United Nations and the Government of the Sudan on the light and heavy support packages for the African Union Mission in the Sudan and looked forward to receiving further clarification regarding funding arrangements and their implications for the Mission's activities.

66. In its resolution 60/122 B, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General, in order to reduce the cost of employing General Service staff, to continue efforts to recruit local staff for the Mission against General Service posts, commensurate with the requirements of the Mission. However, under the proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, there would be a net reduction of 125 national staff posts, even though the Assembly had envisaged that the Mission's local staff would grow in number and gradually replace international staff. The Group strongly endorsed that view.

67. Turning to UNOCI, he said that the Group was concerned by the high vacancy rates and hoped that every effort would be made to fill posts in a timely manner. The Group continued to be concerned about the slow progress on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, elections and the peace process, but hoped that, given the recent political developments in the country, there would be significant steps towards establishing peace and security, law and order and the foundations for reconstruction and development in the period 2007/08. The international community and regional organizations, as well as neighbouring and other interested States, should continue their efforts in that regard.

68. He conveyed the Group's profound gratitude to the United Nations for its contribution to the restoration and consolidation of peace in Burundi and Sierra Leone. In the case of ONUB, the assessment of actual performance against the planned results-based frameworks set out in the 2005/06 budget revealed that some areas had seen more progress than others; it was important to continue working on areas in the latter category. The Group also expected updated information on the reported misappropriation of quick-impact project funds. In the case of UNAMSIL, the donation to the Government of Sierra Leone of assets with an inventory value of over $8 million and a corresponding residual value of over $3 million would help ensure the structure for peace which the United Nations had built would endure.

69. Lastly, he paid tribute to those peacekeepers who had lost their lives preserving peace and security around the world and to all troop-contributing countries, whose commendable efforts helped United Nations missions fulfil their mandates.

70. **Mr. Abdelmannan** (Sudan) expressed his gratitude for the efforts of the international community to achieve stability in the Sudan. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) had originally been established to assist the Government of the Sudan with the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, and there had been high hopes that its activities would have a tangible and positive effect on the lives of ordinary citizens. Unfortunately, however, most of the proposed budget for the Mission seemed to be earmarked for either operational or staffing costs. The Mission should devote more attention to humanitarian assistance programmes, in accordance with its mandate.

71. Only $1.5 million of the $2 million allocated to quick-impact projects had been spent during the financial period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006, and the proposed budget for 2007/08 therefore included a provision of only $1 million for such projects. He was concerned about that reduction, and agreed with the Advisory Committee that a case could have been made for maintaining the level of resources.

72. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration was one of the most important components of the Mission's mandate, and it was therefore unacceptable to decrease the number of staff involved in those activities, particularly in view of the fact that the Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission was partially managed from Nairobi. Appropriate steps should be taken, including through the provision of the necessary resources, to ensure that the Commission was managed from within the Sudan, which would enable it to forge links with other national mechanisms.

73. **Mr. Banny** (Côte d'Ivoire) emphasized the essential role played by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in particular and the impartial forces in general in efforts to restore peace. Following the agreement concluded in Ouagadougou on 4 March 2007, Côte d'Ivoire had been reunified through the abolition of the zone of confidence, efforts were under way to re-establish the rule of law and preparations for the electoral process had begun. By providing UNOCI with the resources it required, Member States were contributing directly to the restoration of peace and security to Côte d'Ivoire.

74. **Mr. Poulin** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, expressed his strong support for UNMIS, which had been able to implement its mandate in spite of the difficult environment, and for the three peace processes under way in the Sudan. He welcomed the appointment of the Joint African Union-United Nations Special Representative for Darfur and looked forward to the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNMIS.

75. The Fifth Committee should endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendations on UNMIS. In particular, he shared the Advisory Committee's concerns at the magnitude of overbudgeting for the 2005/06 period: 17.4 per cent of the appropriation had not been spent. The Secretary-General should analyse the shortcomings of the assessment mission for the purpose of drawing on lessons learned for future missions, and he looked forward to discussing with the Secretariat the possibility of submitting revised budgets in cases where expenditure differed significantly from budgetary assumptions.

76. While the findings of the OIOS audit of UNMIS were cause for concern, he was encouraged by the Mission's proactive steps to rectify the problems identified and hoped that, as a result, the procurement function and control mechanisms would be strengthened. The Mission should also be commended for its efforts to deal with the serious challenges it faced in the areas of recruitment and retention. An assessment of best practices as they related to working conditions should be undertaken with a view to ascertaining how those conditions affected the quality of life and retention rates of peacekeeping staff. He welcomed the Mission's strategy to reduce its reliance on outside contracted services by taking over ground handling operations in three airports, as well as its intention to increase its use of ground transportation. Both initiatives would lead to substantial savings.

77. He was surprised at the Secretary-General's request to continue funding the UNMIS Conduct and Discipline Team under general temporary assistance. That request appeared to contradict the recommendations contained in the comprehensive report on sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (A/60/862) and, since there was no justification for financing an ongoing function through general temporary assistance, the relevant posts should be established.

78. Existing UNMIS resources should be used to support the African Union Mission in the Sudan by means of the light support package, and savings from the current financial period should be used to fund the immediate requirements for the implementation of the heavy support package. Resources appropriated for the 2007/08 period should be used flexibly. He looked forward to examining the results-based framework and the resource requirements for the heavy support package in more detail during the Committee's consideration of the revised estimates for the Mission. It was hoped that a seamless and rapid transition to a hybrid operation, building on the lessons learned from the implementation of the heavy support package, would take place before the end of the 2007/08 period. He urged the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the African Union, to plan carefully the responsibility and accountability structure of that operation.

79. **Mr. Diab** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) had been established over 30 years earlier pursuant to Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and in response to the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan. Despite repeated calls for a total withdrawal to

the 1967 borders, the occupation was still ongoing, and his delegation therefore maintained that, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the funding of UNDOF should be borne by the occupying Power.

80. The Syrian Government had consistently respected the Agreement on Disengagement. It welcomed the presence of UNDOF and supported the efforts being made to restore peace and security to the region. He welcomed the close cooperation between the Syrian authorities and UNDOF and expressed his gratitude to the troop-contributing countries.

81. **Mr. Holovka** (Serbia) said that Serbia fully supported the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in keeping with its common interest in the fulfilment of the mandate established in Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

82. His delegation supported the proposed budget for UNMIK for 2007/08. It was particularly pleased that, following a trend of decreasing appropriations, the proposed budget represented an increase as compared to expenditure for the current period. Any decrease in the budget at the current time would counteract efforts to implement the standards set by the Security Council, particularly with regard to strengthening the rule of law and facilitating the return of internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, the Mission's diminished capacity had not been offset by the performance of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo.

83. He welcomed the proposed changes to the Mission's staffing structure, in particular the sizeable increase in the number of members of special police units within the rule of law component and the proposed strengthening of the International Judicial Support Division. His delegation would, however, have liked to have seen a net increase, rather than a decrease, in the size of the rule of law component as a whole.

84. **Mr. Nkayivu** (Uganda) said that his delegation attached great importance to peacekeeping operations as part of efforts to maintain international peace and security. Ensuring that such operations were adequately funded was not only desirable, but necessary. He had taken note of the proposed budget for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee. The Mission's work in the area of institution-building would pave the way for its involvement in the forthcoming elections, which were an essential step towards the restoration of lasting peace and stability.

85. MONUC would also have an important role to play in ensuring that States in the region cooperated in creating appropriate conditions for the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of foreign armed groups. Efforts to normalize relations with neighbouring States would also be vital, and special attention should be paid to the use by armed groups of such States as staging grounds. In that connection, he hoped that the Security Council would renew the Mission's mandate so that it could continue to deal with the negative forces operating within the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

86. He welcomed the expansion of the logistics hub in Entebbe and reiterated Uganda's commitment to strengthening its partnership with the United Nations. However, he was concerned at the absence of a timetable for the completion of the evaluation of current support functions. He urged the Secretary-General to expedite the evaluation process with a view to ensuring that the Entebbe hub could work effectively, efficiently and at full capacity.

87. **Mr. Thomas** (United Kingdom) said that the living conditions of United Nations peacekeepers had a profound impact not only on their security and safety but also on morale, which could be an equally important factor for mission effectiveness. He therefore requested a written explanation as to why the buildings accommodating British troops in Nicosia, Cyprus, were in such an unacceptable state of repair.

88. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina) reaffirmed his delegation's commitment to providing adequate levels of funding for all peacekeeping operations. Quick-impact projects, provided they were adequately justified, should be fully funded, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities were also a priority for his delegation.

89. Referring to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP), he echoed the concerns expressed by the representative of the United Kingdom. Since the proposed budget for the Force did not contain sufficient information on living conditions, he requested additional details, in writing, about the state of repair of buildings in Nicosia and in Camp San Martin (sector 1). He was surprised that the increase in the proposed budget for UNFICYP was partly

attributable to higher requirements for air operations and transport. During their previous two rotations, Argentine troops had encountered a number of logistical and operational problems relating to the change in rotation methods, and, while he understood that some adjustments were required for the purpose of efficiency gains, such gains must not come at the expense of safety or the operational requirements of missions.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.